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American Dramatists Series

Under the Eagle

Dorothy Potter

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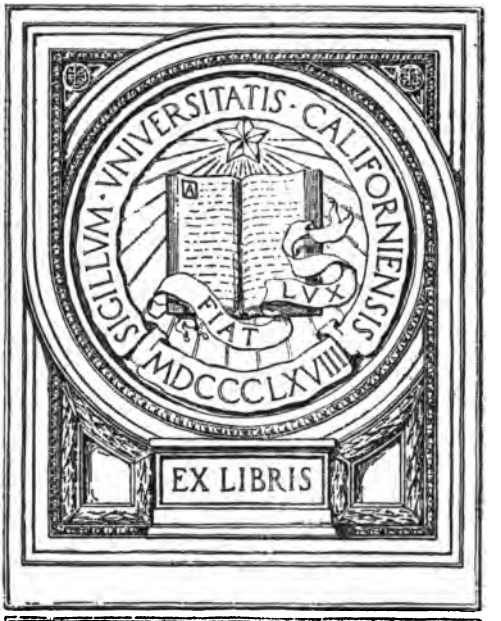

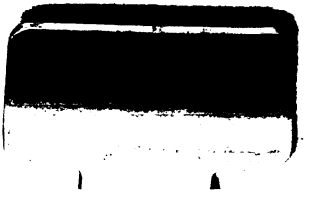

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American Dramatists Series

UNDER THE EAGLE

Three Plays with a Prologue and Epilogue

DOROTHY POTTER

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THE PROLOGUE

CHARACTERS:
The Statesman.
The Citizen.
PLACE:
The Statesman's office.
TIME:
Present.

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UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

UNDER THE EAGLE

THE PROLOGUE

SCENE: *The STATESMAN'S office, handsome and practical.*

AT RISE: *The STATESMAN sits at his desk gazing abstractedly at a calling card, which he holds in his hand.*

(*The CITIZEN enters—a well-dressed, business-like citizen.*

The STATESMAN turns in his swivel chair, notes the CITIZEN and rises politely.)

CITIZEN

You are the Statesman.

STATESMAN

(*Smiling.*) Yes—if you like.

(*Referring to card.*) And you are—

CITIZEN

Never mind the name. I'm a citizen, that's all. If you must qualify me further call me the Thinking Citizen. I've done a good deal of it lately.

STATESMAN

Will you sit down?

CITIZEN

Thanks. (*He sits.*) I'm here to bore you for as long a time as you allow it.

STATESMAN

(*Pointedly.*) Just at present, I am at leisure.

CITIZEN

(*Earnestly.*) Perhaps you can put me right—that's all I'm after—to be put right. I'm not partisan

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or fanatic or prejudiced or excited, I'm not even in an argumentative mood; I'm worried and I want to be convinced that I'm wrong. If you can do that, I'll go away very much—relieved.

STATESMAN

That's part of my business, convincing people. (*Hastily.*) That is, convincing them that what I do is right.

CITIZEN

Yes, yes.

STATESMAN

Of course, if your trouble comes from some situation for which I am not responsible—

CITIZEN

You are responsible—at least, partly responsible, jointly responsible.

STATESMAN

Oh, well, as long as I'm in it, you may come to me for an explanation.

CITIZEN

(*Apologetically.*) I couldn't clearly fix the blame on any one person or set of persons. A lot of you seemed culpable, and I had to put it up to someone so I chose you.

STATESMAN

Now we understand each other.

CITIZEN

I said—culpable. I don't mean it, I don't want to mean any such thing, but I see things and think them over and I can't help feeling that something is wrong. I don't want anything to be wrong. I want you to tell me there isn't—to prove that there isn't. I want you to convince me that I am a fool.

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STATESMAN

(*With involuntary pride.*) I *have* done just that.

CITIZEN

I feel foolish already.

STATESMAN

Now what is your trouble?

CITIZEN

It's about ourselves, our big family here that we call the United States, and its relations with the other families on this earth.

STATESMAN

That is a big question.

CITIZEN

Yes.

STATESMAN

That is a complex question.

CITIZEN

(*Wearily.*) I know.

STATESMAN

Just what phase of our international relations do you wish to discuss?

CITIZEN

I don't want to talk at all.

STATESMAN

What phase do you wish *me* to discuss?

CITIZEN

Don't put it that way or we'll never get along. I don't think about "phases" and "international relations"; I think of us as one big family and of all the rest as other big families.

STATESMAN

(*Humoring him.*) Very well, we'll deal in families.

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CITIZEN

(*Apologetically.*) You see, I want to be convinced on my own ground. I'm thinking in families, and unless you convince in families, we shan't come out even.

STATESMAN

Well, what about our big family?

CITIZEN

(*Seriously.*) Many of our children have left home and gone out to seek their fortune. Some of them have gone to our next-door neighbor on the south.

STATESMAN

(*Striking his level again.*) Mexico. You want to take up the Mexican situation.

CITIZEN

(*Distressed.*) No, no; I don't! I don't know anything about it. (*Sadly.*) If you go on that way you'll prove your point—I can't argue about situations and phases and policies—but you won't convince me. I'll still think what I think now, because I *know* those things about—about our children.

STATESMAN

You must be thinking of the pillaging and murder and so-forth that the Mexicans have done to our people.

CITIZEN

Yes; I am. (*In surprise.*) You—you think of that, too?

STATESMAN

Certainly.

CITIZEN

(*In dread.*) You believe it. You know! You admit!

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STATESMAN

I couldn't deny it very well; it is an incontestable fact.

CITIZEN

(*Dismally.*) Then I am not wrong? (*His face brightening.*) But there is a good reason for such things.

STATESMAN

There is a reason—the Mexicans pillage us because they want our property; they kill us because they hate us.

CITIZEN

Why—why do we allow it? Tell me that.

STATESMAN

Now you are getting into the complications.

CITIZEN

Why? Why should there be complications? It is simple enough. A stranger goes about robbing and murdering my children. What should I do—a big strong man?

STATESMAN

Stop the crimes; punish the criminal.

CITIZEN

Yes; that is what I think. Why don't we do it?

STATESMAN

(*Explaining carefully.*) With national action, you have a question of policy. It is not our policy to interfere.

CITIZEN

Even to stop the crimes against our children? What is a nation but the family magnified? What is its policy but the attitude of a mother toward her children?

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STATESMAN

That's what it is.

CITIZEN

Why are we not fair to our children?

STATESMAN

We are as fair as possible under the circumstances.

CITIZEN

Tell me. I want to be convinced.

STATESMAN

You tell *me*. Would it be wise and just to jeopardize the interests and lives of all for the interests and lives of a few?

CITIZEN

I should think it would be most unjust.

STATESMAN

There you have it.

CITIZEN

Then that is why we do not interfere?

STATESMAN

That is why.

CITIZEN

(*Happily.*) You have given me a good reason there. I can see! I can see! (*His face suddenly clouding.*) But why should our interference jeopardize so many?

STATESMAN

Interference would mean war.

CITIZEN

Of course, and we mustn't have war. (*Thoughtfully.*) If we don't, though, these crimes go on and on. Still, as you say, it is better to jeopardize few than many. (*Suddenly.*) Why doesn't our

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next-door neighbor give the other nations the same trouble?

STATESMAN

He is afraid of the other nations.

CITIZEN

Isn't he afraid of us?

STATESMAN

No.

CITIZEN

We are just as big as the others.

STATESMAN

But not so strong.

CITIZEN

And our neighbor knows that, and because he knows it he dares to murder our children?

STATESMAN

Yes.

CITIZEN

But if we were strong like the other nations, and our neighbor knew it, he would not dare to trifle with us, our children would not suffer and we should not even have to consider going to war.

STATESMAN

That is true.

CITIZEN

(*In fear.*) Then there is something wrong—there must be! (*Catching himself.*) I forget! (*Apologetically.*) I'm thinking now that it is our lack of strength that is responsible for all this trouble, that we are really to blame. Tell me that I am wrong.

STATESMAN

I can't do that.

CITIZEN

(*Pleadingly.*) I want to be convinced.

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STATESMAN

But you are right this time. It is our lack of strength that is responsible for all this trouble.

CITIZEN

(*Reluctantly.*) Then there is something wrong after all; someone is culpable. You can't put me right.

STATESMAN

I can't argue away an incontestable fact.

CITIZEN

If we had a larger army—

STATESMAN

If we had a large, efficient army—Go on.

CITIZEN

Our army is quite inadequate?

STATESMAN

Quite. It is not large enough to win either fear or respect. They have dared much with us.

CITIZEN

(*In a strangely quiet voice, as one speaks of a nightmare that has become reality.*) Is it true that we have given up things that no one would have dared to ask for if we had been strong?

STATESMAN

Yes; that is true.

CITIZEN

(*With lowered eyes.*) Is it true that we must yield before we are asked to yield, to save our honor?

STATESMAN

Yes.

CITIZEN

Is it true that others have not attacked us, simply because *they* have not been ready?

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STATESMAN

Undoubtedly true; we present no bulwark against them.

CITIZEN

(*Very softly.*) And if some day one of these nations should find itself ready, desirous of our land and treasure, would it be comparatively easy—? Is that also incontestable?

STATESMAN

Incontestable.

CITIZEN

(*Hopelessly.*) Then I am not a fool!

STATESMAN

No—unless I, too, am one. I have agreed with you from the first, my friend.

CURTAIN

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"WATCHFUL WAITING"

CHARACTERS:
The General.
First Orderly.
Second Orderly.
An American Woman.
PLACE:
Headquarters of the General in a town of Northern Mexico.
TIME:
Present.

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"WATCHFUL WAITING"

SCENE: *Rough room with doors R. and L. Window at back. Table C. Chairs. It is early morning.*

AT RISE: *FIRST Orderly, a dirty Mexican soldier, dozes in a chair, his rifle beside him.*

(*Enter, left, SECOND ORDERLY, a dirty Mexican soldier.*)

SECOND ORDERLY

Jeh! Jeh!

(*FIRST ORDERLY wakes with a start and a look behind him. Seeing SECOND ORDERLY, he growls.*)

SECOND ORDERLY

El general—la señora.

FIRST ORDERLY

Sí, sí! (*He picks up his rifle and goes out slowly, right.*)

SECOND ORDERLY

(*Holding open door, left.*) Entre usted, señora.

(*An AMERICAN WOMAN enters. She is fair, young pretty and dressed in a white linen riding habit. SECOND ORDERLY goes out, left, closing door. The WOMAN stands waiting, swinging a riding crop impatiently. She is evidently angry.*)

FIRST ORDERLY

(*Re-entering and holding open door for someone outside.*) La Norte-Americana.

(*The GENERAL enters. He is a typical Mexican—dark, with a heavy black mustache. He wears a uniform and a large sombrero. FIRST ORDER-*

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LY closes door and takes post against it, where he soon dozes.)

GENERAL

(*His hat in his hand, bowing and smiling.*) Ah, señorita ó señora—?

WOMAN

(*Curtly.*) Speak English. I am in a hurry and I want to be sure that we understand each other.

GENERAL

(*Bowing.*) With pleasure, señora.

WOMAN

Don't you know who I am?

GENERAL

(*Apologetically.*) I regret—

WOMAN

I am Mrs. Welford— (*Emphatically.*) Mrs. James Welford.

GENERAL

(*Politely.*) Ah? The name, señora, is not familiar.

WOMAN

Mr. Welford is secretary of the United Mines Company. He is in sole charge of the property here since operations have been stopped.

GENERAL

(*Graciously.*) And the señora is the wife of Mr. Welford?—charming!

WOMAN

(*Looking at him steadily.*) My husband was arrested last night by your men.

GENERAL

(*In horrified surprise.*) Señora! but not by my orders—! How can I—!

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WOMAN

Of course not. But that is not the point. With the country in its present condition, mistakes and irregularities are often unavoidable. No one understands that better than I, but this—this arrest is too much.

GENERAL

I agree with the señora.

WOMAN

I have come here this morning to gain your assurance that such a piece of impudence will not occur again. Really, an apology, either by the officer in charge of the squad or by you, is due Mr. Welford.

GENERAL

Mr. Welford does not ask it himself?

WOMAN

(*Angrily.*) Mr. Welford is still in the custody of those pirates, I suppose.

GENERAL

(*Horrified.*) Ah!

WOMAN

(*Her voice rising.*) And you'd better not keep him there any longer.

GENERAL

(*Grieved but helpless.*) How could I—?

WOMAN

Just send for him and you'll have a good chance to hear his opinion of the affair. Atrocious! (*She turns away with an angry toss of her head. The GENERAL wrings his hands. Turning back to him.*) Well? I'm sure any delay in making amends will not make that opinion any pleasanter to listen to.

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GENERAL

(*Meekly.*) Very true, of course.

WOMAN

Then don't delay.

GENERAL

But I would first make explanation of the—the offense. Unpardonable! but—my own difficulties—

WOMAN

(*Bored.*) Yes; I'll listen to you while Mr. Welford is on his way over. Get your man off first. (*He gives her a sidelong glance, then turns to the ORDERLY.*)

GENERAL

Jeh! (*FIRST ORDERLY wakens with a start and a look behind.*) Tengan prisa! (*The two stand watching while the FIRST ORDERLY opens the door, right, and repeats "Tengan prisa." He then closes the door and settles back to sleep.*)

WOMAN

Now I'll hear what you have to say.

GENERAL

(*Humbly, inclining his head.*) Gracias, señora. (*She nods briefly.*) Señora, the soldiers are not good. There is no discipline. What can I do?

WOMAN

I'm sure no one knows if you don't. You are the officer in command.

GENERAL

But they will not obey me; they do as they please.

WOMAN

Yes; because you all do as you please, officers as well as soldiers. Discipline must begin at the top and extend down to the bottom. With you it has not

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even begun, and see what the lack of it has done to your country. Ruin of life, ruin of property. Murder, pillage, burning, looting. It is hideous! No man is safe at his work by day or in his bed at night. And not content with destroying you fellow-countrymen, you have turned upon us Americans. We have entered your barbarous land and brought money and energy and progress. We have brought you all you have to be proud of, and for that you owe us vengeance. For our money you rob us; for our energy you throw us into your filthy prisons; for the progress we have made, you destroy our property and ruin our enterprises. What do you expect us to think of you? Bandits you are and bandits we call you. Why, as I came here this morning, your soldiers were digging a grave at the very doorstep. I suppose it will shelter some hapless victim of your lack of discipline.

GENERAL

The señora is cruel; she does not understand.

WOMAN.

Humph!

GENERAL

The Americans are my friends. I know them for my great friends and I wish them no harm. It is not much time that I am in this town, but I have seen the señor and the señora riding down to the mine, the señora on her little brown horse, all dressed in white, riding in the sunlight, and I have—

WOMAN.

Then you did know me?

GENERAL.

Not the name, señora.

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WOMAN.

I see. (*Impatiently.*) Well, your man is slow. The commanding officer might do well to reprimand him. (*She strolls toward the window.*)

GENERAL.

(*Apologetically.*) The prison is crowded. It is difficult perhaps to find the pris—the Señor Welford.

WOMAN.

(*Glancing out.*) So! the grave is finished.

GENERAL.

And the officer commanding the squad? Will the señora describe him?

WOMAN.

(*Turning from the window.*) The man who arrested Mr. Welford?

GENERAL.

Sí, señora.

WOMAN.

(*Thoughtfully, putting her crop on the chair.*) He was short—about your height.

GENERAL.

Ah!

WOMAN.

And about your build. His face—I did not notice especially except—yes, he had a black mustache, something like yours.

GENERAL.

Ah?

WOMAN.

I really cannot describe him accurately. You Mexicans are all dark. It is hard for me to tell one from another. He had black eyes of course. (*Laughing a little.*) You see, I am hopeless. This

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description could fit you as well as that pirate. He was very rough and coarse in his manner, that I remember well.

GENERAL.

And the arrest? What happened, señora?

WOMAN.

It was about midnight. They broke in the door and seized Mr. Welford before he could reach his revolver. There were six of them; this officer seemed to be in command. They claimed that Mr. Welford had not paid taxes to the new town government, which is perfectly absurd, of course. Mr. Welford told them so and ordered them to leave the house. They refused to go. They seized him just as he was and dragged him, literally dragged him away.

GENERAL

(*Curiously.*) The señora was afraid?

WOMAN

There was nothing to be afraid of. I was angry.

GENERAL.

The señora is brave.

WOMAN

(*Impatiently.*) That is not the point. There is no necessity for bravery or cause for fear except, perhaps, on the part of the commanding officer who allowed such an outrage to be committed.

GENERAL.

(*Helplessly.*) Ah! señora!

WOMAN

(*Growing angrier as she proceeds.*) Really, you know, it makes me furious; the whole affair is so impudent, so absurd, so unnecessary. You treat us as

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though we were a lot of your dirty peons to be dragged about and clapt into prison. And here we are Americans, citizens of the United States, living here under our own flag, under the American Eagle, mind you! and still you dare. Oh, you don't do us any real harm, of course. That would be to put your head into the lion's mouth, and you have no stomach for that. Oh, no! You simply rely on our natural disregard for little things and our unwillingness to bother our government, and so rob and annoy and insult us to your heart's content. Impudence! It's time we put a stop to this absurd forbearance on our part. Do you know, I've half a mind to leave you this minute and carry this affair to the President of the United States! (*She goes toward the door.*)

GENERAL

Señora! Stay, I beg! Only hear me!

WOMAN

(*Her hand on the door.*) No! I've had enough.

GENERAL

All I ask is justice.

WOMAN

Justice! Humph! (*But she pauses.*)

GENERAL

First I ask your pardon, I beg you to forgive this —this crime. (*She is tapping the floor with her boot, her back to him.*) For the past, I can do no more; for the future, I make great effort, believe me. You speak of the condition of the country. Only listen. Our people here are not like Americans; they are barbarous and ignorant and poor. They are downtrodden and so ignorant. Then comes to them the vision of liberty. (*She turns to him.*) It is the

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same like the great American vision. (*She takes a step toward him.*) They rise up! They are ignorant. They are mad with the dream of liberty and the taste of power. They will not be controlled; they are just free after so long and they seek only vengeance.

WOMAN

(*She is back by the chair, interested.*) Yes; but they will accomplish nothing that way. The movement must be organized and directed to a certain point. They must have a leader.

GENERAL

(*Sadly.*) They have a leader, but he is not obeyed.

WOMAN

You must teach them.

GENERAL

If it were possible. But see, señora, what a tragedy! (*Striking his breast.*) If this leader loves his country, if he has lived always, hoping to bring his people out of the dark of slavery into great freedom. If, at last, the great uprising comes—Ah, but the people do not understand! They will not be led. They will not obey. The leader is called a bandit. The great revolution must fail. Señora, it is hard!

WOMAN

Of course it is, but not impossible. You haven't gone about it right, that's all. Why don't you educate the people? Explain the situation to them. Tell them that they can do nothing without organization, but that if they will unite and obey their leader absolutely, they shall win freedom. Stir them up! Inspire them! Keep the idea of freedom in their minds

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so that to gain it they will yield to the discipline. Then discipline them and you'll win out.

GENERAL

(*Confidentially.*) Señora, I have already begun to try the discipline.

WOMAN

Good! How did it work out? (*She sits down, interested.*)

GENERAL

Alas! the man refused to obey. He must die this morning.

WOMAN

(*Seriously.*) Oh! (*Earnestly.*) Well, you see it is the first time you have tried. You can't expect them to understand at once. It is a pity, but a few examples are necessary at first.

GENERAL

It is for this man that the soldiers have dug the grave.

WOMAN

Oh, I see.

GENERAL

He was very independent, this man; he did always as he pleased. I am the officer in command here. Have I not a right to demand obedience?

WOMAN

Certainly, from everyone under your authority.

GENERAL

But I am supreme.

WOMAN

Then you should accomplish great things.

GENERAL

I ordered certain war taxes to be paid. It was a necessity. He refused to pay.

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WOMAN

Perhaps he thought that, being a soldier, he was exempt. Did you have it explained to him?

GENERAL

I explained to him myself that no one was exempt. He refused to pay.

WOMAN

Perhaps he had no money.

GENERAL

He has much, very much. He came to me here in this room. He swore he would never pay. I was not hard. I offered that he give me something else instead of money, something he had that I wanted. He was wild, that man. He insulted me—me, the commanding officer! He would have killed me. I ordered him to be seized and shot.

WOMAN

It is a pity for the man, but you will find it easy to collect the tax now.

GENERAL

And I have all the money instead of just a part.

WOMAN

(*Nodding.*) Confiscated, of course.

GENERAL

And something else that I wanted more than all his money.

WOMAN

The example for discipline.

GENERAL

Oh, so very much more, señora.

WOMAN

I hope it may improve the rioting dispositions of the rest. (*Looking at the watch on her wrist.*) They

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are slow about Mr. Welford. I am sorry—for them. (*She smiles.*)

GENERAL

There are few men at the prison. All are busy now with this unfortunate— (*As the crack of rifles is heard.*) Ah!

WOMAN

What? The execution?

GENERAL

They are through now. Now they will bring Mr. Welford up.

WOMAN

I hate to think of it—life going out like that, but—

GENERAL

(*Sharply, to FIRST ORDERLY.*) Parato!

(*The GENERAL stands by the table waiting, his head bent, one finger tapping the table. The FIRST ORDERLY rouses himself and goes yawning across to door, left.*

FIRST ORDERLY

(*Opening the door and calling.*) Jeh! Parato!

(*Enter the SECOND ORDERLY. He stands just inside the open door. The FIRST ORDERLY walks slowly back to door, right, and opens it. The WOMAN has picked up her crop and stands swingnig it against the chair and talking as the orderlies move about.*)

WOMAN

(*Smiling brightly.*) Well, I came here to be very angry and vindictive, and after all I shall not even let Mr. Welford give you his whole opinion. You see, he has been under arrest since midnight and

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will not be in a very forgiving mood. We can't blame him either, for it was rather—unusual, you know. When you don't see the other side!

(*The orderlies have reached their respective doors. They look at the GENERAL, whose head is still bent, as he listens and taps the table; at the WOMAN, swinging her crop and smiling; then at each other and close the doors simultaneously.*)

WOMAN

(*With a little laugh.*) How uncharitable we are sometimes before we understand! (*She becomes conscious of the closing of the doors and glances about.*)

(*The GENERAL has raised his eyes—just his eyes, beast's eyes above bestial lips.*

(*The finger taps cease; the riding crop stops swinging.*)

CURTAIN.

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YELLOW YIELDING

CHARACTERS:
A Mother.
Her Son.
PLACE:
A cabin in the mountains.
TIME:
Then, now and to come.

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YEL

rusty, old-fashioned

: The
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them and serv

so

RISE: *The curtains are parte*
ascape of trees stripped by Autum
MOTHER is getting supper. She is a woma
middle life with the energy of youth in her bright eyes; the tenderness of age in her pleasant face. She is dressed in a coarse woolen dress and a wide gingham apron.

(*The MOTHER pauses in her operations from time to time to glance out the window. After her last survey she smiles and returns to the stove, humming.*)

(*Her SON enters, a powerfully built young man with a clear, frank face. He wears heavy boots and rough clothing. He enters slowly, closes the door and stands with his hand on the nob and his face averted.*)

MOTHER

(*Stirring the victuals, cheerily.*) You are late tonight, son.

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YELLOW YIELDING

SCENE: *The interior of a small log cabin. A door is on the right. At back are two windows with a stove between them. Some curtained shelves are built against the wall, left. A table and three chairs occupy the center of the room. A wooden bench with a basin and pail of water stands against the wall, right. Above the bench hangs a roller towel. The windows are fitted with short curtains, that can be drawn across them and serve as shades. It is evening.*

AT RISE: *The curtains are parted, revealing a landscape of trees stripped by Autumn. The MOTHER is getting supper. She is a woman in middle life with the energy of youth in her bright eyes; the tenderness of age in her pleasant face. She is dressed in a coarse woolen dress and a wide gingham apron.*

(*The MOTHER pauses in her operations from time to time to glance out the window. After her last survey she smiles and returns to the stove, humming.*)

(*Her SON enters, a powerfully built young man with a clear, frank face. He wears heavy boots and rough clothing. He enters slowly, closes the door and stands with his hand on the nob and his face averted.*)

MOTHER

(*Stirring the victuals, cheerily.*) You are late tonight, son.

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SON

Mother, I saw the General just now.

MOTHER

He is well? The General is always well. Wash your hands; supper will soon be ready. (*SON goes to the bench.*)

SON

(*Pouring water into the basin from the pail.*) I met him on the Great Road.

MOTHER

And then had a long walk back across the fields. It is quite dark already; winter is coming.

SON

(*Looking up at the wall in front of him.*) Where is the gun?

MOTHER

The gun! Then you have only just noticed. I took it down months ago.

SON

(*Fearfully.*) You—you haven't thrown it away?

MOTHER

Not yet. I thought I should ask you first—you might have some sentiment, since it was your father's —then I forgot all about it.

SON

Where is it, mother?

MOTHER

Let me see!—somewhere—behind the stove. I think I dropped it there.

SON

(*Hunting behind the stove.*) I can't find it. It isn't here.

MOTHER

Under the wood-box perhaps.

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SON

Yes, I have it. (*He takes a rusty, old-fashioned gun from behind the stove.*)

MOTHER

What are you going to do with it?

SON

I—just clean it a little.

MOTHER

Dirty old thing! I'd throw it away. Sentiment for useless trash is rather silly.

SON

(*Looking at the gun, to himself.*) I know so little about it. (*He fingers it, trying to take it apart.*)

MOTHER

In these days we don't have use for such things.

SON

Mother, why do they call him the General?

MOTHER

That comes from the old days, your father's day and mine and his father's, when this country was wild and rough. The gun wasn't hanging on the wall then; it was standing in the corner or lying across your father's knees. Then the best shot was the best man. Your father was a good shot, but his father was better. It was for that we named him, and his son has naturally come to the [illegible] him.

SON

The General is a good shot. (*As he comprehends the mechanism of the gun.*) There!

MOTHER

So they say. He keeps in practice.

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SON

I don't know how to shoot at all.

MOTHER

How should you know, when you've never been taught?

SON

Why wasn't I taught? My father was a good shot; he must have known.

MOTHER

He did know that it would never be necessary for you to learn any such thing. These are different times we're living in now. People don't shoot and fight and plunder each other any more. We have a new ideal, my son—to live at peace with the world, each man in his own place.

SON

You believe that, mother?

MOTHER

And you believe it, too.

SON

What does the General believe?

MOTHER

The same, I suppose.

SON

Then why does he practice shooting?

MOTHER

For amusement. Bless you, my son, we don't care what the General believes; we have only ourselves to answer for.

SON

But, mother— (*His face hardens.*)

MOTHER

Supper is ready, and you must be hungry.

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SON

(*Turning away.*) Not very, just now.

MOTHER

Why, what is the matter?

SON

Mother, why did you give the Great Road to the General?

MOTHER

I? He told you!

SON

Yes.

MOTHER

It was not my fault, dear. Your father promised it to his father, and I was in honor bound to fulfill that promise.

SON

I don't see why. Father built the road with his own money and labor. He meant that the General should use it, but not without pay. Why should my father have labored and paid for the General's comfort and profit?

MOTHER

Because your father—whatever he meant—gave the General to understand that the road would be his without pay. It was so the General understood the promise. We cannot cloud your father's memory by breaking that promise. Honor is higher than all else.

SON

But what about the money? I must pay and pay and pay that the General may profit. I made no promise, yet my patrimony must be spent to satisfy the General's keen sense of honor. I wonder if he calls it honorable to take from me without paying?

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MOTHER

Sh! You are excited! It is not the General's fault, but your father's. He should have had a clear understanding. As for the money, that is nothing. You are a better farmer than the General; you have learned to plow instead of to shoot. You are richer than he. The trifle it will take to keep the road in repair need not really matter to you.

SON

What about the principle?

MOTHER

It is a good principle—when we can afford it—to be big and generous, to overlook trifles for our honor's sake.

SON

Very well. (*In a hard voice.*) The General wants the South Pasture.

MOTHER

What do you mean?

SON

Just that!—the General wants the South Pasture.

MOTHER

He wants the South Pasture? Tell him we do not wish to sell.

SON

He does not wish to buy.

MOTHER

Well—?

SON

You have given him the Great Road, and now he wants the South Pasture.

MOTHER

He would not expect us to give him our land. He is playing you a joke.

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SON

Mother, it is not a joke.

MOTHER

Then the man is crazy. People don't do such things in this day. If we were living in the Stone Age perhaps—barbarians! But now!—for him to suggest such a thing! What can he be thinking of?

SON

That we have land and he has none; that he is strong and we are weak; that he will barter his strength for our land.

MOTHER

Fortunately, Civilization will not allow it.

SON

Civilization! What is it? You speak as though it were a power created for your protection. It is not a power and it does not belong exclusively to you. It is a result that he has helped to make as well as you—he with his practice of shooting. He is stronger than we; the law is his, and will accord him as much as he has power to take.

MOTHER

The South Pasture!

SON

Yes. I suppose we can live even then; we shall still have this house and garden.

MOTHER

If we thought of accepting his insane proposals, but we do not.

SON

You gave him the Great Road.

MOTHER

That is a different matter. This time he has not the shadow of a claim; he is trying to see how far he

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can go. We'll stop him right here.

SON

(*Slowly.*) Yes; I thought that was the right—

MOTHER

(*Decidedly.*) It is the only thing to do. (*Son begins to clean the gun.*) What can the man expect? Your father's property! His son's inheritance! And 'twas hard winning, too! Wild beasts and wild men to be subdued! Elements to be braved! Bought with sweat and blood, with labor and agony in the making. Your father and I conquered it together for our son, who alone has the right to the product of our travail.

SON

Yes, mother; you are right.

MOTHER

Then comes this upstart to demand our winnings, simply because he is a strong brute with desires. He will find that we, who have braved monsters before are not afraid.

SON

No, no! (*Nervously.*) Only—this gun! It is so rusty! I don't think it will shoot at all.

MOTHER

(*Horrified.*) Shoot! My son, I do not mean to go as far as that.

SON

It is the General's doing; not mine. To-night he comes for his answer. If we yield, he is satisfied; if we refuse to yield, he will fight. Where is the ammunition?

MOTHER

But you cannot fight with the General. He would kill you at once.

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SON

Yes; he will kill me. (*A knock at the door.*) That is he! Quick! The ammunition!

MOTHER

I don't know where it is. You will not fight. Go! Speak to him. Give me the gun. (*He yields the gun reluctantly.*) Tell him how we stand. Appeal to his reason and his sense of justice. Tell him we wish to be friends.

SON

(*Going.*) Then, mother, while I am gone, will you find the ammunition?

MOTHER

Yes, yes! You will not need it. Be friendly with him. Compromise if necessary. (*The SON goes out, closing the door.*) It will be all right. There! I must find the ammunition. (*She hunts.*) Where can it be? There will be no need of it anyway. (*Looking on the shelves.*) Here! (*Gathering up two cartridges.*) One—two cartridges. That is enough for our purpose. (*SON re-enters. He is very pale.*) Well?

SON

Have you found it?

MOTHER

What—?

SON

It is no use; he will not compromise. We must give him the South Pasture or fight. Give me the ammunition.

MOTHER

(*Slowly.*) No—I can't do that. (*With decision.*) You must not fight; he would only kill you. I've

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been thinking. It is better to give him the South Pasture.

SON

Mother! is that right? I am not afraid!

MOTHER

It is right.

SON

(*Bitterly.*) He will have the South Pasture. My inheritance!

MOTHER

Don't keep him waiting. It will not do to exasperate him.

SON

(*Violently.*) He is a thief!

MOTHER

(*Putting her hand over his mouth.*) Hush! Hush! (*She holds him for an instant. When he is calm she lets him go.*) Now go.

SON

(*In a low voice.*) I am strong!— stronger than he and younger. If I knew how to shoot! (*He turns away with a hoarse sound like a sob in his throat and goes out.*)

MOTHER

(*Nervously, bustling about the room.*) Of course that is right. It is the only thing to do. He would kill my son, and then the property would be worthless to me. (*SON re-enters with bowed head and sits at table.*) After all, we have more than we need. We must not be greedy. The General had not so much as we. We can still live quite cozily here with the house and garden left. The South Pasture was a great care, too. Now we can have a

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little rest instead of always working. Besides, I could not let you die. Any sacrifice to save my son. What is the matter?

SON

Nothing.

MOTHER

What did the General say?

SON

He laughed.

MOTHER

Let him laugh. I have saved my son; I know that I am right. What do I care for his laughing?

SON

He said something, too.

MOTHER

Well, what did he say?

SON

He called you a coward!

MOTHER

Pooh! His opinion is nothing to me. He is an old liar anyway.

SON

(*Deliberately.*) It is the truth—you are a coward!

MOTHER

(*Horrified.*) What! You are not my son!

SON

But I am! I am the son you have reared and taught; for whom you have striven and bled and piled up a vast inheritance. I am the son you have deceived and tricked and made into a helpless creature. You gave me all you had; you taught me all you knew—all but the first law, the law of life, the

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law of self-defense, the law by which I might learn to hold my heritage in the face of the strong ones of the earth. You could have made me a man among men; you have left me a child among giants. If my neighbor is good-natured he laughs at me; if he is ill-natured, he beats me. Good or bad, I am at his mercy. Where is the honor in that? What is strong or noble or inspiring in such pitiful helplessness?

MOTHER

How could I know what was right? We did what seemed best. The country was no longer wild; the world seemed civilized. There was only one man—

SON

That one man makes all the difference. Wild! Civilized! Don't you know that a country is wild as long as it holds a single wild man? While there is one man prepared to kill, all must be so prepared in self-defense. The world is as civilized as the one most barbarous of all men.

MOTHER

We did not think of that. It seemed that the age of peace and good-will had come.

SON

Yes! You built up a dream to please your taste and used it to blind yourselves into deceit and your child into a death-trap.

MOTHER

If I have been wrong, I am sorry. I acted for the best, and it has turned out the worst. There is nothing I can do now. But listen to this: Right or wrong, in the past, in the present I am right. What does anything matter when life is at stake? It was you or the South Pasture, and I chose you.

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SON

Because you are a coward! You are afraid to have me fight, because you know I should be killed. You are afraid to see my blood run, because it would dye you red with guilt for keeping me as ignorant as the miserable living bait at the mouth of the trap. (*Picking up the cartridges.*) Only two!

MOTHER

What are you doing?

SON

(*Loading the gun.*) Preparing, as well as I can, for the General's next visit.

MOTHER

He will not come again; there is nothing more to be had.

SON

The house and garden.

MOTHER

But this is all we have. If this is taken, we have nowhere to go. He is reasonable enough to know that we must live somewhere.

SON

Yes; he is very reasonable. He reasons that as long as he is stronger than we, he can take from us everything—to the very last.

MOTHER

It is better to die than to be a homeless beggar.

SON

That is what we shall do—I first and you afterwards. He will return. At the eleventh hour, you will hand me this rusty gun and bid me go out to fight for our home—I, ignorant, helpless child, against the General. There will be nothing else to do.

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MOTHER

(*In exaltation.*) No! That can never come to pass. You have forgotten our birthright. We were born under the Eagle—the Eagle of Liberty! We come from the strongest of the earth, and all mankind respect us. He will not spill your blood or rob our treasure or violate our home, because he will not dare—with the Eagle guarding us. It is tradition—religion! We are above such devastation!

SON

(*After a pause.*) Perhaps! I am tired.

MOTHER

(*Smiling.*) And hungry. The supper is all cold. I'll warm it again. Your favorite supper, too.

SON

Somehow, I am not hungry.

MOTHER

Oh, come! Try a cup of coffee first, then the rest will be hot. (*Brings him coffee.*) Isn't that good?

SON

(*After tasting it.*) Yes; mother. (*With a shiver.*) I am cold.

MOTHER

We'll put on more wood. There! A roaring fire! And here's the supper steaming hot. (*She brings supper to him.*)

SON

It does smell good.

MOTHER

I thought so.

SON

(*Eating.*) I'm hungry after all. I've been working on the new ditch all day.

(*MOTHER goes to the stove, smiling. A knock*

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at the door. MOTHER listens with fear in her face. SON does not hear but continues eating and talking.)

SON

It's the ditch I'm building across the barren part of the garden to bring the water down.

MOTHER

Yes; I understand. (*She goes to the window, right, and looks out. The bare trees have been swallowed up in darkness.*)

SON

I want to make that part of the garden blossom like a paradise.

MOTHER

(*Who has turned away from the window with a ghastly face.*) Yes. (*She slowly draws the curtains and goes to the window, left.*)

SON

It will be beautiful! Fruit-trees in rows along the ditch and flowers back of them. Do you think flowers are silly?

MOTHER

(*At window, left.*) No.

SON

One must have some beauty. (*MOTHER draws the curtains, left.*)

MOTHER

(*Turning from the window.*) What kind of flowers?

SON

Oh, poppies and roses and—all the bright ones.

(*She comes to the center of the room and stands there, her eyes fixed on her son.*)

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SON

It will be like a picture. I can imagine it now. The blue water, the ripe fruit and the bright flowers, all under the sunshine. What do you think, mother? Won't it be beautiful?

(*There is a silence. The SON turns in surprise and looks into his mother's eyes.*)

MOTHER

Mother! What—?

(*She points to the window, her eyes following her hand.*)

SON

What are you looking at?

MOTHER

The curtains are drawn.

SON

What do you see?

MOTHER

Nothing—it is night.

(*The knock resounds on the door. The SON rises slowly. Silently, the MOTHER takes the gun and puts it into his hands.*)

CURTAIN

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"BOMBAST AND PLATITUDES"

CHARACTERS:
The Prominent Citizen.
His Servant.
The General's Interpreter.
PLACE:
A seaport town.
TIME:
In the hands of the Fates.

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"BOMBAST AND PLATITUDES"

SCENE: *The comfortable library of a bachelor's apartment, on the top floor of a select hotel. Doors right and left. Windows at back. View from the windows of roofs and chimneys. It is very early morning.*

AT RISE: The room is dark and deserted.

(*The CITIZEN unlocks the door, right, and enters. He is in evening dress.*)

CITIZEN

Where's the light? What's the meaning of this? (*Calling.*) Marks! I say, Marks! (*In disgust.*) Asleep, I suppose. He's getting worse every day, that fellow. (*Stumbles about, groping for the switch.*) Where in—There! (*He finds switch and turns on the light. Grumbles.*) Got sleepy and too stupid to remember that I was out. Then he turns out the light and goes to bed. We'll see about it. (*Opening door, left, and calling.*) Marks! Marks! (*Closes door. An idea comes to him.*) Or he went out on a spree, thinking to get back before I did. Probably been doing it right along. I'll cashier him, that's all. (*Eye falling on the clock.*) Fo—It *is* four o'clock! I thought we were almighty slow coming up-town. Why the devil should there be a traffic jam at this hour of the night and morning? Four o'clock! He must be in. (*Calling through door.*) Marks! (*Turning.*) No! (*Silly.*) Ah, I see! It was so late, he thought I was staying out for the night and saw his chance. He'll have a surprise

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in the morning. (*He takes off his coat. Footsteps are heard outside door, right. He listens.*) Marks! Now we shall see! (*He switches off the light.*)

(*The door, right, opens and the SERVANT enters, panting. He closes the door after him, leans against it for an instant, then advances across the room, his breath coming in a sob.*)

(*The CITIZEN switches on the light.*)

SERVANT

My God! (*He crouches down as though to avoid a blow.*)

CITIZEN

Well, Marks!

SERVANT

Oh, it's you, sir.

CITIZEN

I didn't stay out all night as you expected.

SERVANT

No, sir.

CITIZEN

(*Angrily.*) What do you mean by coming in the front door?

SERVANT

(*Hopelessly.*) I didn't think it mattered now.

CITIZEN

Your service is over. Leave to-morrow, to-day, as soon as it is light.

SERVANT

Yes, sir.

CITIZEN

Leave at once!

SERVANT

Yes, sir. This is really terrible.

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CITIZEN

I'm glad you appreciate the situation.

SERVANT

What are you going to do?

CITIZEN

(*Staring at him in amazement.*) What am I going to do?

SERVANT

They will take everything. You wouldn't want to stay around after that, would you?

CITIZEN

After what? What are you talking about?

SERVANT

After they take possess—My God! don't you know what has happened?

CITIZEN

You've gone crazy!

SERVANT

(*Wildly.*) We're invaded! The enemy has come! They've taken the city and the harbor and all the roads. They keep pouring in, hundreds of them. I saw them! There is nothing to be done. We're invaded!

CITIZEN

(*Aside.*) Better get a doctor. (*He goes to the telephone.*)

SERVANT

You can't get a connection; there is no one in the office.

CITIZEN

(*At telephone.*) Hello! Hello!

SERVANT

They've all gone.

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CITIZEN

Queer! (*He leaves telephone and puts on coat.*)

SERVANT

Don't go out. What good will it do? They are everywhere.

CITIZEN

Sh! It's all right, Marks. I'm going to get a doctor.

SERVANT

You won't believe me. I'm not crazy; it's the truth. (*Going to the window.*) Come! (*At window.*) See! There is not a taxi in the line; they have taken them all.

CITIZEN

(*Looking out.*) The traffic jam!

SERVANT

You saw it? Their wagon-train.

CITIZEN

(*Incredulous.*) Nobody seemed to notice it.

SERVANT

They are so quiet, so orderly, so natural. Nobody realized. Now they are in possession.

CITIZEN

Who are they?

SERVANT

The enemy! They have really come.

CITIZEN

(*With an incredulous laugh.*) It isn't so! It can't be! Our own troops are having special manoeuvres. The War Department has been talking about that sort of thing lately. They're our own men demonstrating their efficiency

SERVANT

I saw them; they are not our own men.

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CITIZEN

Perhaps it's a little uprising—foreign laborers or something. The police will settle it in the morning.

SERVANT

They are soldiers, soldiers of the enemy.

CITIZEN

Then we shall whip them and send them home. It can't be anything in force or we'd have heard something about it. It may be an unauthorized attempt on the part of a warship commander to get even with us for some fancied insult. He'll be in as much trouble from his own country as from ours.

SERVANT

Thousands of men!—I saw them—and horses! Guns and wagons! They are coming now!

(*It has grown light enough outside so that the chimneys are visible. Among them, on a tall staff, hangs the Flag.*)

CITIZEN

(*Leaning out.*) Yes, yes! I see! How many! Yes —yes, they are the enemy. What does it mean? Look at the men and horses and guns! How many!

SERVANT

They are driving the people before them!

CITIZEN

(*Furiously.*) This is too much! But I'm glad it's happened. We have stood enough from them and all the others, too. It's time we gave them a lesson. By Heaven, they ought to be shot, every one of them! (*Shaking his fist.*) Wait till Uncle Sam's army gets you! Just wait!

(*A knock at the door. The SERVANT opens it and goes out.*)

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CITIZEN

The people running before them! Our people! Running before *them!* My God!

SERVANT

(*Re-entering.*) We must get out of here at once. The General wants this apartment for an observation station.

CITIZEN

Does he indeed!

SERVANT

It's the view of the harbor. Sir, we'd better go.

CITIZEN

Go? Go! Do you think I'd go? Do you think I'd leave my own place because that murderer, who commands those rats orders it? Do you think I'd do anything he told me to do? Oh—ho! Let him try to make me!

SERVANT

Everybody else has left the hotel.

CITIZEN

Then—damn them!—there's one that won't go. (*Knock at the door is repeated.*)

SERVANT

(*Nervously.*) What shall I say? He's trying to be polite.

CITIZEN

Send the General to me, that's all. (*He takes a revolver from the table drawer.*)

SERVANT

(*Frightened.*) Oh, no sir!

CITIZEN

I want to talk to him.

SERVANT

He doesn't speak English.

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CITIZEN

Get someone that does. I'll talk to any one of them. Haven't much choice among rats.

(*The INTERPRETER enters quickly. He is a little man in uniform. The SERVANT gasps.*)

CITIZEN

(*Covering INTERPRETER with revolver.*) Stop! Who are you?

INTERPRETER

(*Calmly.*) The General's Interpreter.

SERVANT

(*Timidly.*) Hadn't we better stand together, sir?

CITIZEN

Stand where you please! I'll manage this myself. (*As INTERPRETER advances.*) Stop! or I shoot.

INTERPRETER

Shoot, if you like; you will be shot afterwards.

CITIZEN

I might do something else first.

INTERPRETER

Escape? You might jump out the window. There are soldiers at both entrances. (*CITIZEN lowers his revolver.*) Better give it to me.

(*CITIZEN looks at him, then puts the revolver on the table. INTERPRETER pockets it.*)

CITIZEN

Now we can talk.

INTERPRETER

I'll give you five minutes—till the General arrives.

CITIZEN

The General! What are you people trying to do anyway? Are you crazy? This is the United States, and we are living in the twentieth century. What

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do you mean by landing an armed force on our soil and marching an army through our city and ordering me to get out of my home? What in the name of Heaven do you mean?

INTERPRETER

Our meaning should be easily comprehended.

CITIZEN

But you've broken the law, violated our—our integrity, invaded our land. Don't you know that you will be punished?

INTERPRETER

We are not anticipating any such thing.

CITIZEN

But you will be. Our army, the Army of the United States, will be rushed out. You will be surrounded and probably annihilated. You've gone too far to make excuses. Why, I expect the army will be here in—in a very short time.

INTERPRETER

We are prepared for that.

CITIZEN

You mean to fight?

INTERPRETER

Certainly.

CITIZEN

You fool! What do you expect to gain?

INTERPRETER

What we have come for.

CITIZEN

That must be a good beating; it's what you'll get. How did you get in here anyway? The harbor is mined.

INTERPRETER

We did not come by the harbor.

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CITIZEN

So much the worse for you. You'll wish you hadn't come at all, when the army arrives.

INTERPRETER

When it arrives.

CITIZEN

Yes.

INTERPRETER

How soon do you think that will be?

CITIZEN

As soon as it hears of your craziness.

INTERPRETER

We have cut all the communications with the rest of the country.

CITIZEN

News will get through just the same—a day of two late perhaps. I don't begrudge you two days of grace when I think of what's coming to you.

INTERPRETER

In the meantime, we take possession of all the mountain passes and fortify them.

CITIZEN

Lots of good that will do you.

INTERPRETER

It will easily keep your army at bay for a long time,—your little army!

CITIZEN

What about the army on this side of the mountains?

INTERPRETER

Here?

CITIZEN

(*Enjoying his surprise.*) At your back! The militia!

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INTERPRETER

Oh! (*Hiding a smile.*) In this state you have —several hundred.

CITIZEN

Yes, thank goodness! At this very minute they are in the hills, preparing to attack you in the rear.

INTERPRETER

Yes; they are probably in the hills.

CITIZEN

Just wait! You haven't met the good fighting American yet.

INTERPRETER

We are not really afraid. You see, it occurred to us to seize all their equipment in the arsenals and armories first. So they are quite as helpless as you.

CITIZEN

No guns! No ammunition!

INTERPRETER

No. By this time even the revolvers have been collected.

CITIZEN

(*Quickly.*) I'll buy mine back.

INTERPRETER

Impossible.

CITIZEN

(*Offering money.*) Here! A hundred dollars!

INTERPRETER

(*Annoyed.*) No, no.

CITIZEN

Two hundred!

INTERPRETER

Impossible.

CITIZEN

What do you want anyway?

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INTERPRETER

Thank you, we shall take what we want.

CITIZEN

What is it?

INTERPRETER

That depends. We already hold the entire coast back to the mountains.

CITIZEN

The entire coast!

INTERPRETER

Yes. We have done everywhere what we have done here.

CITIZEN

Just the same?

INTERPRETER

Just the same.

CITIZEN

You have all the passes?

INTERPRETER

Every one.

CITIZEN

You have disarmed all the militia?

INTERPRETER

We have disarmed everyone.

CITIZEN

Then there's nothing to do but wait. I can wait to see you scoundrels eat dirt.

INTERPRETER

Your wait will be a long one. Think of your miserable little army, gathering itself slowly together from the four corners of the earth. By the time it has found itself, we are securely fortified in

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our position—this rich, fertile country, guarded toward the sea by our fleet, on land by that great mountain chain. You have neither guns nor ammunition. Both must be secured. More delay. We have the people thoroughly subjugated and are reaping our first harvest.

CITIZEN

You have forgotten the fleet.

INTERPRETER

Oh, no; we have one, too—only it is larger than yours. (*As before.*) Now your army is ready. It marches to the passes—one hundred thousand strong, perhaps—to hurl itself again and again, vainly, disastrously against that mighty wall of rock and those passes backed by hundreds of thousands of our men. The time will pass very slowly.

CITIZEN

(*Bitterly.*) If we had been ready for you, you would never have dared.

INTERPRETER

But you were not ready.

CITIZEN

No.

SERVANT

(*At the window.*) The flag! They are going to take it down!

CITIZEN

(*Rushing to the window.*) Where? Ah! (*Wildly.*) They mustn't do it! They can't (*Turning to the INTERPRETER.*) Tell them! Quick! before it is too late. This is my country still—your being here doesn't make any difference,—it is still my

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country, just the same as yesterday. Tell them not to take the flag away. That is the Eagle! It has always been there, ever since we started—up there—above us. It's got to stay there! can't you see? It belongs there always, always, from the beginning. If the Eagle goes down—Ah! (*He rushes to the window and tears it open.*)

INTERPRETER

(*Seizing him.*) Don't make a fool of yourself. That flag accomplishes nothing. We are here anyway. It is only a symbol for the world to see. While it floats there, the world sees that the land is yours, the city, the mountains and the harbor; when it falls — (*The Flag drops out of sight.*) Ah! Now it is all ours.

(*The CITIZEN covers his face with his hands. Sound of footsteps outside, right.*)

INTERPRETER

(*In a harsh voice.*) You must get out of here at once; the General has come.

(*To CITIZEN.*) Come, sir. (*They start toward door, right.*)

INTERPRETER

No!—the back way. Quick! (*They go toward door, left. At the door the CITIZEN turns.*

CITIZEN

(*To INTERPRETER.*) Wait! The soldiers in the fort. Our regulars in the fort on the harbor. What has become of them? They were armed.

INTERPRETER

Yes. There were about a hundred and fifty of them. It was night—very dark—and they did not expect us. We—It was all over very quickly.

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(*The CITIZEN and his SERVANT go out door, left. The INTERPRETER opens the door right, and stands at salute. No one has thought of turning off the light. It burns pale yellow against a background of day.*)

CURTAIN

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EPILOGUE

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EPILOGUE

SCENE: *The STATESMAN'S office as in prologue.*

AT RISE: *The STATESMAN and the CITIZEN are still in their chairs. They have talked a long time.*

STATESMAN

(*Rising.*) Now it is all clear?

CITIZEN

(*Rising.*) Quite clear. I came to be convinced that I was wrong to worry over our weak position. Instead you have shown me how right I am. And you are not at fault at all.

STATESMAN

My dear sir, I can recommend and recommend, but my power ends there. The people are all-powerful. What they desire, they get. If they wish to safe-guard themselves, they can do so, and they only.

CITIZEN

They must be made to do so. Can you suggest a way?

STATESMAN

You are willing to do all you can?

CITIZEN

I will do anything.

STATESMAN

Well, then—

CITIZEN

There is a way.

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STATESMAN

There is always a way. You remember the name you gave me, when you came in?

CITIZEN

I called myself the thinking citizen, didn't I?

STATESMAN

If you wish to help, make of every man you meet a Thinking Citizen.

CURTAIN

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